

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

## THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)



EDITED BY T. E. CALLANDER

FULHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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No. 384. MAY 1931

## Editorial and Announcements

THE next meeting of the Association will be held on Wednesday, 13th May, at the Watford Public Library, and the following attractive programme has been arranged :

- 5.30-6.30 p.m. Inspection of library.
- 6.30-8 p.m. Meeting in the Lecture Hall. *Chairman*: Osbert Burdett, Esq. *Speaker*: Mr. W. B. Stevenson of Hendon. *Subject*: Modern Poetry.
- 8-8.30 p.m. Light refreshments by invitation of the Library Committee.
- 8.30 p.m. Informal dance.

Those intending to be present at this meeting should notify the Borough Librarian, Public Library, Watford, as soon as possible, and not later than 9th May, indicating whether they intend to stay to the dance. On receipt of such information, a souvenir programme and plan of the Library will be sent to intending visitors.

The nearest station is Watford Junction (L.M.S. from Euston and Broad Street, and the Bakerloo). The Metro. station is within fifteen minutes' walk of the Library. The *Green Line* services from Croydon, Hendon and London, and the 301 from Aylesbury set down at the Pond a few minutes from the Library, while buses 142a and b and 158 serve the town.



The May meeting of the Council will be held at St. Bride's Institute at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 20th May.



The ANNUAL MEETING of the Association will be held at Bath on Wednesday, 10th June, by kind invitation of His Worship the Mayor of Bath, Alderman T. Sturge Cotterell.

### PROGRAMME

- 9.15 a.m. Depart from Paddington.
- 11.46 „ Arrive at Bath.
- 12 noon Reception at the Guildhall by His Worship the Mayor.
- 12.30 p.m. Visit to the Abbey.
- 1.15 „ Lunch at Fortt's Restaurant, by kind invitation of the Directors of Messrs. Cedric Chivers, Ltd.
- 2.15 „ Tour of the City by motor-coach, including a visit to the Bookbinding works of Messrs. Cedric Chivers.
- 3.45 „ Tour of the Roman Baths.

- 4.30 p.m. Tea at the Pump Room, by kind invitation of His Worship the Mayor.  
5.30 „ Business Meeting.  
7.54 „ Depart from Bath.  
10.25 „ Arrive at Paddington.

The success of our annual meetings is a tradition of the Association, and it is felt that this very attractive programme, arranged by Mr. R. W. M. Wright, Director and Chief Librarian of Bath, will more than maintain the standard.

Arrangements have been made for London members to travel in reserved coaches at the special cheap rate of 13s. 5d. for the return journey. Those who intend to travel from London *must notify Miss Exley, St. Marylebone Public Library, Gloucester Place, W.1, not later than the 20th May*, although money for tickets need not be received before the 3rd June.

Divisional members are asked to notify their Divisional Secretaries of their intention to be present not later than the 20th May.

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The Council of the A.A.L. wish to state that the views expressed by Mr. Stanley Snaith in his letter to the Editor, published in the April LIBRARY ASSISTANT, are personal, and do not represent the opinions of the Council.

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The Hon. Editor wishes to express his regret that passages in the March and April issues should have been construed as a personal attack on Mr. Nowell. He would emphasise the fact that the publication of these passages, though perhaps an error of judgment, was in no way inspired by any malice against Mr. Nowell, who has always been a valued friend of the ASSISTANT.

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In order to avoid a clash with the Library Association Conference, the date of the Library Association Summer School, to be held at Birmingham, has been altered to the 17th-29th August. Those who intend to go to the Summer School are asked to take particular notice of this change of date.

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A successful meeting of the Association was held at the Harlesden Branch of the Willesden Public Libraries on Wednesday, 11th March. The afternoon was devoted to an inspection of the recently erected Neasden and Cricklewood Branches. These are among the most modern small libraries in this country, and they aroused the whole-hearted admiration of all who saw them. The Neasden Branch, in particular, was well worth a visit, as it embodies a feature of library planning which is unique in England. This is an open-air newsroom on a balcony commanding a magnificent prospect of the waters of the Welsh Harp. Those London members of the Association who missed this meeting should not omit to visit the Neasden Library.

After tea, Mr. J. B. Purdie, Librarian of the Cricklewood Library, read a paper on "Libraries in Cities and Outlying Districts." It is hoped to print this paper in the near future. The discussion which followed the reading of the paper was chiefly remarkable for the fact that every speaker either missed the point altogether, or carefully evaded it.

The April meeting was held at Richmond, Surrey, on the 8th April. After an afternoon visit to Ham House, organised and conducted by Mr. Piper, an evening session took place in the Junior Department of the Richmond Public Library. Mr. F. M. Gardner, Librarian of the Bramley Branch Library, Leeds, representing the Yorkshire Division, read a paper ambiguously entitled "Between Ourselves." He celebrated his visit to London by subjecting to a devastating commentary almost every phase of modern librarianship. Speaking softly, almost apologetically, Mr. Gardner blew sky-high about ninety per cent. of the current cant of the profession. His paper will shortly appear, unexpurgated, in the *ASSISTANT*, and should give many people food for thought.

It is perhaps not out of place to mention here that, at this meeting, Mr. Cecil Piper, Librarian of Richmond, from the chair, proved the remarkable elasticity of an agenda by delivering a scathing criticism of the editorial policy of the *LIBRARY ASSISTANT*. His suggestion that the results of this policy should be discussed at the meeting proved unaccountably abortive, the Hon. Editor alone having any ideas on the matter.

Those wishing to obtain copies of the A.A.L. pamphlets should address their enquiries to Mr. R. N. Thomas, A.L.A., at the Cubitt Town Public Library, Strattondale Street, E.14, and not, as formerly, at the Bromley Public Library.

We have received the following announcement concerning the Library Association Conference from Mr. Guy Keeling, B.A., Secretary of the Library Association:

#### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Cheltenham: 31st August-5th September, 1931*

Members will have seen in the last issue of the *Library Association Record* of the change of date of the Conference to the week commencing 31st August. A copy of the hotel list and a leaflet descriptive of Cheltenham were included as loose insets, and many of those desirous of attending will, no doubt, have engaged their accommodation. Those who have not already booked their rooms are advised to do so without delay by writing direct to the addresses indicated on the list.

A post card has been circulated with the April number of the *Record* for the use of members of the Association who propose to be present at the

Conference; they are asked to post this to the Secretary *as soon as possible, and in any case not later than 15th June*, and to give their names precisely in the form in which they would wish them to appear in the list of visitors which is to be printed in the programme. No undertaking can be given that railway vouchers will be forwarded to those who fail to advise the Secretary by 15th June, or that names not sent in by this date will be included in the list of visitors.

In granting the usual concession of fare-and-one-third for the return journey (as set out on the railway voucher), the Railway Clearing House announce that this concession will *not* apply to the road-rail route to Cheltenham, via Oxford.

It is hoped during July to issue a detailed, printed programme, together with railway vouchers, to all those who have indicated their intention of being present at the Conference. A provisional programme is given below.

- Monday.* Registration and Sectional Meetings.
- Tuesday:*
- Morning. Welcome by the Mayor of Cheltenham.  
Induction of President.  
Opening of Official Exhibition.
- Afternoon. Address, on "Regional Organisation," by Sir Henry Miers, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S. (Trustee of the British Museum and of the National Central Library, President of the Museums Association).  
Discussion, led by representatives of the North of England and West Midlands Schemes.
- Wednesday:*
- Morning. "The Status of the Public Library Service from the Standpoint of Governing Bodies."
- Afternoon. County Libraries Section Meeting: "The Future of the Service."
- Evening. Sectional Meetings, including an International Session, probably under the auspices of the University and Research Section, with a paper by Dr. T. P. Sevensma (Librarian of the League of Nations).  
Followed by addresses on "B.B.C. Listening Groups," and on "Recreational Reading and the Public Library."
- Thursday:*
- Morning. Annual Meeting.
- Afternoon. Round-Table Conference on:
- (i) Modern Library Technique: advanced methods.
  - (ii) Reference Library Policy.
  - (iii) Problems of the Small Library.
- Evening. Annual Dinner.
- Friday.* Whole-day and half-day excursions.

## The Relation between the Arrangement of Books and the Reading Interests of Boys and Girls

By LILLIAN H. SMITH, *Head of the Boys' and Girls' Division, Toronto Public Libraries.*

ONE of the most interesting and immediately rewarding experiments we have ever made was undertaken during the summer months of 1930, when the arrangement of the books in our Boys' and Girls' Libraries was changed from the Dewey decimal classification to an arrangement which is more intelligible and attractive to boys and girls, and which has grown out of our fifteen years of observation of their reading interests.

The Dewey decimal system of classification as applied to books for children was found unsuitable because, in the first place, the divisions do not represent the reading interests of children; e.g. 000 General Works, 100 Philosophy, 200 Religion, 300 Sociology, 400 Philology. In the second place, the Dewey classification makes it impossible to obtain accurate statistics of what children read, from the standpoint of showing their own natural reading interests.

A classification of books for an adult or reference collection is not easily adapted to children's books, because the use of the same book in the children's room is entirely different from the use of it by adult readers. For this reason it is necessary that the arrangement of the children's books should be one which will bring together like groups of books under a subject intelligible to children and well related to their interests. An illustration from the Dewey division "sociology" explains the divergent point of view on the same book by adults and children. Adult readers realize the relation to sociology of economics, civics, commerce, army and navy, folklore, etc., and adults understand why these subjects should be assembled in one large division. To children they are, of course, unrelated. For example, when a child wishes to find, in connection with his geography, the wheat production of Australia, he is sent to 330, where natural products from the economic standpoint are found, not to 919, where the geographies of that country are placed. It is useless to explain to him that the difference lies in one being "Economics" and the other not.

This is also true of civics, which the child studies in connection with the history of a particular country. There are also side by side on the 300 shelves books on making plasticine animals, blazing trails, military manoeuvres and designs for theatrical costumes; and if a child wishes to give a play he finds the pattern for a Roman toga in 390, and scenery for the background in 793. To children all these subjects are left unrelated by the Dewey classi-

fiction, whereas they are definitely related for children's use to some other class; they should be placed where they are most usefully related. Since fairy tales are placed in this division in large numbers, it is assumed, for statistical purposes, that juvenile circulation of 300's represents the number of fairy tales read, and the use of any other books in this division is accordingly ignored.

The Dewey classification does not accurately show the reading that is being done in the children's room. An evidence of this is the division of easy reading for little children into primers (428), geographies (910), etc. This gives a misleading idea of the number of books that are being read in each of these classes, because the content of these books is not of outstanding value, and they are read, not so much for the information they may contain, as to give facility in reading. For this reason it is more important to the librarian to know how many books are being read by little children than to have them divided up among philology, Indians of North America, Holland, Nature study, etc.

The following list shows what has been included in our new arrangement. The allotment of the subject-headings has been made to correspond with the development of a child's reading interest from one subject to another, i.e. from picture books to fairy tales, from fairy tales to legendary heroes, and from there to the heroes of exploration, and so on to the standard fiction that is read by the older boys and girls. In this way books of a related interest are brought next to one another on the shelves:

*X—Picture Books.*

- (1) Books with pictures and a simply running text.
- (2) Books which have such distinguished illustrations as to be valuable as picture books, irrespective of whether the text is written for little children or not (ex.: Boutet de Monvel's *Joan of Arc*).

*Z—Little Children's Books.*

Easy books in primer style for children who are learning to read.

*A—Fairy Tales.*

- (1) Includes folklore and fables.
- (2) Hans Andersen (formerly with fiction).

*B—Legends.*

More or less isolated stories of the past written about semi-historical figures who are not so definitely connected with cycle literature as to have been included in the "Epic Heroes" (e.g. William Tell, Guy of Warwick, "The Bell of Atri").

*C—Myths.*

Stories from various sources derived from the religions of early races.

*D—Epic Heroes.*

Heroes about whom complete cycles of stories have accumulated and been given literary form, e.g. Perseus, Siegfried, Cuchulain, Rustem, Arthur.

*E—Exploration.*

Discovery of new territories as distinguished from geography, travel, and pioneer history.

*F—Famous People.*

Biography and personal narratives.

*G—History.*

(To be subdivided by country on the shelves.)

*H—Geography and Description.*

Geographies and travel in modern countries.

Expeditions for scientific research.

(Descriptions of ancient civilizations to be classified with the history of that country.)

*K—Natural History.*

Includes all animate life except human, i.e. botany and zoology. Owing to the great interest in these subjects, they have been separated from the more theoretical sciences in order to show the number of books that are being read in these classes.

*L—Science.*

Geology, astronomy, chemistry, etc.

*N—Practical Science.*

Includes all the applied sciences and industries.

*O—Things to Do.*

This brings together all books on handicrafts and hobbies which were formerly scattered in many places, e.g. 383 Stamps, 600 Boys handy book, 623-8 Cork ships, 694 Woodwork, 790 Books of pets and hobbies, 793 Box-craft. These all represent to the children the same interest—of finding out how to make something—and for that reason it is more useful to have all the books of this kind grouped under one head than divided up on the shelves among practical science, boat-building, carpentry, amusements and games.

*P—Art.*

Taken in the broad sense to include architecture, sculpture, and designing, as well as painting and drawing.

*Q—Music.*

Theory, appreciation, and stories of the operas, as well as music.

*R—Plays (Drama).*

Those included formerly in 793 and also in 822, 832, etc., and retellings such as Lamb.

Books on costume and play production.

*S—Poetry.**T—The Bible.*



*W—Standard Fiction.*

Works of standard authors, such as Dickens, Scott, Thackeray. As this is to represent the reading of older boys and girls, books written for younger children, although by standard authors, are not to be included, e.g. *The Rose and the Ring*; *King of the Golden River*; and *Goody Two Shoes*.

Installing our new arrangement involved us in surprisingly few difficulties, and was accomplished almost "overnight." An account of the practical details of our undertaking, and of the working of the present system, may be of interest.

The first step was to assign each book to its new class, which we did by marking the new classification letter beside each title in "Books for Boys and Girls," which is also our order list. Then with this guide, the letter was written on the books themselves, above the old Dewey numbering, which we temporarily disregarded, erasing as time allowed. The books were placed on the shelves in the new arrangement with their own headings attractively printed above the sections. The old catalogue cards were abandoned, and the shelf list put in its place, with the subject printed on the outside of the drawer, corresponding with the subject-heading above the section to which the cards refer. Standard fiction is arranged in one alphabet with other fiction both in the shelf list and on the shelves.

Believing that restriction to one book of fiction places a premium on that class, we removed the restriction, so that every book stands on its own merits and appeal. The result has been a surprising drop in the fiction percentage. We do not know whether this is due to the removal of the restriction, or to the new arrangement which brings all classes so attractively to the notice of boys and girls.

The enthusiasm of the staff over the working and results of the change, and the valid information now available to us as to what our boys and girls read, seem an indication that some change was needed to estimate the value of our work. The new arrangement is elastic, and allows for leeway to fit individual needs and preferences, and as our experience with this experiment grows, we hope to have some interesting, accurate and informing material on the kind of books that are read by the boys and girls of our libraries.

## Library Work in Canada<sup>1</sup>

By DOROTHY E. PROCTER

BEFORE beginning to describe the libraries of Canada, it might be as well to mention a few general features of the Dominion which are worth stressing. The most outstanding and difficult of realization is the size of the country, for this alone would prove a deterrent to any compre-

<sup>1</sup> Read at a meeting of the Midland Division of the A.A.L., at Coventry, 17th December, 1930.

hensive library system. Canada, however, is divided into provinces—for the purposes of economic, political and educational administration and each province has its own library system. One must remember that a Canadian province is somewhat larger than an English county. Ontario, alone, is more than three times the size of the whole of England. This province also has the largest proportion of the total population of Canada, this being undoubtedly the chief reason why Ontario has been able to inaugurate and maintain by far the most comprehensive and well-organized library system in Canada.

The other unusual problem is provided by the French-Canadians. Over here one thinks of Canadians as being almost the same as Americans, and it is not always of importance to us to make the distinction one way or the other. But no true Canadian likes to be taken for an American, and one certainly could not make that mistake about French-Canadians. They not only speak, read and write French but also retain all the national characteristics of their ancestors. Quebec is the French-Canadian province of Canada and here the population is largely made up of French Catholics. The remaining numbers consist of English-speaking Canadians, so that one has two distinct peoples living side by side in Quebec. One can easily imagine all the different problems that such a situation must present—especially to those whose work is of an educational nature, as library work undoubtedly is. As one can see, each province has its own problems to settle, and distances being so great, there are not many facilities for seeking advice from one's neighbour. Here, for instance, if Chiswick is thinking of building a new library, the librarian, after a few hours' travel, may visit new library buildings in the provinces, and can learn very much that will be helpful in planning the new building. But in Canada one has to be content with written descriptions—magazine articles—or use one's own judgment, visits to other libraries being almost an impossibility.

Librarianship in Canada is regarded as a profession pre-eminently suitable for women and it is very noticeable that there are few male librarians. Toronto, which has one of the largest library systems in the Dominion, has a female staff of 150 under the administration of two men. But, though the larger libraries are under the control of men, nearly every small town or village library is run by a woman. This is one unusual feature of library work in Canada.

At this point it seems appropriate to speak of library schools and training for the profession, for this also presents some differences from English ways. In Canada (and in the States also) it is the rule, while here it is more often the exception, to attend a Library School before obtaining a position. In many instances the School is affiliated to a university and awards a diploma to successful students. This is the case in Ontario. The School is now part of the University of Toronto. The course lasts a year and covers all professional subjects. Many of the lectures are given by members of the

Public Library staff, and all students spend a certain amount of time on practical work in the central and branch libraries of the city. There were thirty-five students during the first year under the new scheme; the majority were from Ontario but a few came from other provinces. Nearly all these students have already taken a degree, but those who have not done so are required to hold an examination certificate of matriculation standard. Where such a high standard of education and professional training is required, one expects to find a correspondingly high rate of remuneration. In Toronto, the minimum salary for an assistant who has a B.A., and who has attended a library school is a little more than \$1,000 per annum, or, English money, £200. A salary scheme according to age is not in force anywhere as far as I know.

After spending four years in Canada I feel that it should be possible for me to give first-hand information about the libraries in each province. As it is, except for various short holidays, I spent the whole of the time in Toronto, and what little I can say about library systems in other parts of Canada I have gleaned from the usual sources. There is a belief amongst some of you, perhaps, that Canadian libraries are supported by the State. This is not so in the sense that some United States libraries are run by the State. In British Columbia, where there are three distinct types of libraries, those known as "public library associations" receive a government grant in aid, paid through a Library Commission. The remainder of their income is derived from membership dues, so that these are a type of public subscription library, quite different from anything we have over here. Apart from these "public library associations," of which there are twenty-three, British Columbia has only six genuine public libraries and 386 travelling libraries. Library matters in British Columbia, unfortunately, have not been well organized during the past, as may be understood when it is realized that settlers in a new country give their time and money first of all to building bridges, making roads and to other very necessary pioneer work. But, after the Public Library Act of 1919, a Public Library Commission of three members was appointed and they govern these three types of libraries, and there is no doubt that the general survey which they are making will do much towards reorganizing and helping many of the libraries in existence. British Columbia, unlike some of the other provinces, has done little towards helping school libraries.

In spite of a \$1 per \$1 grant up to \$50 per school—this method of distributing books has not been used as much as it might have been. It is not difficult to understand this, for, although the travelling libraries do wonders, in reaching isolated districts, they cannot possibly deal with every request for books, and in many places the school library is the only available supply of literature for many miles. The few library buildings there are have already become inadequate, and this is one of the questions upon which the Library Commission will report. One recent building is worth mentioning.

since it appears to be planned on a generous scale. This is the building for the Library of the University of British Columbia at Vancouver. The first unit of the building is complete and, judging by a photograph, it seems a very dignified structure. The accommodation will eventually be capable of expansion to hold 2,000,000 volumes.

While we are on the West Coast it would be as well to cover all the provinces of the West before coming back to Ontario.

Yukon territory, which lies north of British Columbia, and which you all, no doubt, associate with missionaries and the gold mines of the Klondyke, has one public library at Dawson, but in 1927 no recent information was available and I have not been able to find out anything about it at all.

Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are the three wheat-growing provinces. Each has a Legislative Library housed at the government buildings of the province. Alberta has seven public libraries—the largest of 44,000 volumes at Calgary. There are several private or special libraries also, such as the Law Society Library, the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art Library and the Calgary Normal School Library. In Manitoba there are only five public libraries, the largest at Winnipeg having 122,000 volumes.

Saskatchewan has the largest number of libraries of these three provinces—twelve in all—but they are very small, the population of nine of the towns being under 5,000. Regina is the largest town with a population of 34,432 and a library system consisting of a central building and three branches.

Instead of describing the Ontario libraries now (for they come in here geographically) I will leave them to the last. The chief feature of the library system of Nova Scotia is the important work they do with children—through a very complete distribution of books to the school libraries. This is the exact opposite of the method in Ontario, where the children are encouraged to come to the library, but in Nova Scotia their scheme accomplishes work of which they are very proud. There are twelve public libraries in this province, the largest of which is at Halifax. The libraries are at a great disadvantage as there is no "satisfactory legislation" and their income depends on grants from the municipalities—the amount never exceeding more than \$8,000 per annum to one library, and much less than that in many cases. An efficient system of libraries must be difficult to organize or maintain where there is no definite income and Nova Scotia is certainly at a disadvantage as compared with some of the other provinces.

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island both have a certain number of public libraries, but both are in need of a far larger number of travelling libraries, to reach districts which are settled, but have too few inhabitants to be able to support a public library. Everything I have read emphasizes the importance and the need for travelling libraries throughout every part of

rural Canada. Living in a large town like Toronto, with its 600,000 population and a very adequate and well organized library system, one never really thought of, or properly visualized, all the thousands of small towns, villages, lumber-camps and fishing hamlets scattered throughout Canada, many of them so isolated that they are beyond the reach of even the most thorough travelling library scheme yet organized in any province. Even with a greatly increased total population I believe there will always be the necessity for this type of book distribution in every province.

I have already referred to the problems which arise in Quebec owing to the population being largely French-Canadian. There is a Legislative Library at Quebec, a few small public libraries, but the Universities of Laval and McGill have by far the largest and most important collections of books in this province. One of the most interesting libraries is at Westmount, which is one of the entirely English residential districts of Montreal. Although geographically part of Montreal, it has an English mayor and council and the library is supported absolutely by the municipal taxes. It is actually the only free public library in this province. The children's room, opened in 1911, was said then to be the finest in Canada, but it had the disadvantage of being limited to those children living in Westmount. As this was the only library for children in Montreal, the majority were not provided with books. But, in 1928, the Local Council of Women, realizing what a great need there was for a children's library, appealed for funds from the people of Montreal, appointed a librarian, and in a very short time were able to open a library, free to all the young readers of Montreal. They were able to accomplish this very speedily because the room, all the fittings and furniture necessary were already there, the Fraser Institute (one of Montreal's town libraries) having set aside a room for juvenile readers two years before, but never having had enough money to buy books. There is no doubt that this library will be a success. It provides for both French and English Canadian children, one-quarter of its books being in French.

I am afraid this is nothing but a brief reference to library work in Quebec, but one could easily devote a separate paper to the libraries of each province, and you may think that my paper so far deals more with the libraries themselves than the actual work done. However, I may be able to make this paper live up to its title now that we are all back in Ontario and where I feel on more familiar ground.

The library system of this province owes its growth and efficiency to two facts: (1) that Ontario now possesses excellent library legislation, (2) that the public libraries come under the control of the Department of Education. This means that there is a government minister (in this case the Minister of Education) who is bound to take an interest in and be conversant with library matters.

It would take too long to give an historical account of the growth of the library system in Ontario, but no doubt the enthusiasm shown for learning

and culture since 1800, when forty-one residents of Niagara opened a subscription library, has helped in establishing a very flourishing system of libraries.

The legislation, amongst other things, permits a certain sum of money (about \$55,000, voted annually by the Provincial government) to be used for cash grants to libraries which are in need of it. In some cases the grant takes the form of a reward for work done and this no doubt is an incentive to many of the small rural libraries to raise their standard of service. All the libraries benefit by the Ontario Library Act of 1920, which allows a tax that may bring in any amount up to 50 c. (2s.) per capita of the population. This amount may be increased by the town council. Another good feature of the library legislation is that power is given to the Minister of Education to provide other services in the interests of the public libraries, such as the power to maintain a library school, to pass regulations regarding grants and other matters. These laws apply to the whole of the province and are administered through a section of the Department of Education known as the Public Libraries Branch. The existence of a central administrative body of this kind is bound to create a well-organized and united system of libraries throughout the province. As well as an adequate library rate, Ontario has a library school, a travelling library system, a library association for the whole of the province, a journal and guide to book-selection and as I have already mentioned, a section of the Department of Education known as the Public Libraries Branch. The head of this branch, whose headquarters are in Toronto, is known as the Provincial Inspector of Public Libraries and he is directly responsible for the libraries of the province to the Minister of Education, to whom he submits an annual report. These reports give one an excellent idea of the progress that is made each year. As there are 506 public libraries throughout this province and 600 travelling libraries, the position of Inspector is no sinecure. It may surprise you to hear that in spite of this large number of libraries there are still nearly 1,000,000 people in Ontario who are without any form of book supply. Unfortunately the large areas and scattered population make the introduction of a county system rather difficult and for the present the travelling libraries do the best they can. An innovation of this form of library was started in 1926 in the shape of a school and library car. These railway cars are fully equipped as classrooms, with desks for sixteen children, maps, blackboards, pictures, and even living accommodation for the teacher who travels with the car. One runs on the C.P.R. line and the other on the C.N.R., and each car stops at about seven different points along the route for a day or two. All the children come to the car for lessons and are given homework to occupy some of their time until the car calls again—in about five weeks' time. And each school car acts as a travelling public library to the people who live in these, isolated parts. Cases are provided in the cars for the books, which include some reference works, books on general subjects and fiction, all these being

for adult readers and forming one-third of the total number. The others are provided for children and old people whose knowledge of English is limited. The teacher attached to the car acts as librarian, and has also undertaken to give classes to adults if there is any demand for them. This is one example of the type of work which is done by the Public Libraries Branch and I personally think it is one of the most ingenious ideas for a travelling library of which I have ever heard.

I must not give you the impression that every library in Ontario is run on ideal lines, has a fine building for its books, a trained librarian and a well-chosen stock of books. There must be dozens of small towns where the reverse of these conditions exist. Whilst there is, and has been for some years past, a real desire to improve their administration and their service to the public, these libraries have suffered from the appointment of inadequately trained librarians—due to the limited knowledge of the requirements of a librarian as shown by the members of the Board. In the rural and village libraries good progress is shown towards raising their standard of service, and it is commendable in these small libraries, as only part-time librarians are employed, not, as a rule, qualified. Of the smallest type of library there are 400 alone and this large number is partly due to the legislative grant, which I have already mentioned. The Public Libraries Branch, amongst other work, gives advice to any library in Ontario which asks for it and at various times has sent instructors on a round of visits to give help and information on accession work, classification, loans and other problems which face the untrained village librarian.

The remaining libraries of Ontario (about 100) may be roughly classified in the following way—thirty small town libraries, twenty-five large town libraries, twenty-one in the smaller cities with a population of 15,000 to 35,000, the three important libraries of Ottawa, Hamilton and London—and then, at the top, Toronto, in a class by itself. These with the group of 400 in the very small class, give us a total of 500—and although these libraries differ so considerably in size, income, efficiency and other particulars, they all form a very complete and well organized library scheme. One outstanding feature of all library work in Ontario is the close communication it has with education. This, of course, is a result of the libraries being one branch of the department of education. In all Canadian libraries provision is made for children, but owing to numerous factors, some of which have been mentioned, I think Ontario leads the way. Although the children are encouraged to come to the library, the schools are not neglected and children's librarians make periodical visits to the schools, to interest the teachers and scholars in the libraries. In Toronto each branch has its own room for young readers and its trained librarian. Story hours, picture collections, dramatic work are all part of the usual routine.

## Et Cetera

By STANLEY SNAITH

### I

IN the present instalment of these scribblings I propose to depart from the normal procedure. For the time being we have had enough—some might say too much—of bulletins and quarterly guides and the indigestible confections which, in the guise of annual reports, are inflicted once a year upon long-suffering committees. Already our friends of the North are prepared to come down upon me like the wolf on the fold; and I have no desire that my promising career should be nipped untimely in the bud. Besides, this is no day for invective. It is a spring day.

On such a morning, can I be expected to dedicate my energies to the study of —'s dreary "reader's guide," or the annual report, produced with all the jobbing printer's contempt for the æsthetics of his craft, in the cimmerian smoke of —?

Inclination runs rather towards a re-reading of Herrick, or a morning spent in studying the Van Goghs and Gertlers at the Tate Gallery; or to the writing of a lyric full of the spirit of England. I propose, then, to take a holiday: a holiday in "the little nowhere of the brain." If, as seems doubtful, I have any readers beside the Permanently Soured Gentlemen who dash off splenetic letters about me to the Editor, I invite them to make holiday with me. Let us bury the hatchet. The Pipe of Peace is filled, the tankard is winking "with beaded bubbles at the brim." The shadowy sward invites the print of our bodies. The twittering of the birds will provide the cadenzas and variations to our theme.

### II

The death of Arnold Bennett removes from our midst a familiar and much-loved figure. He is irreplaceable. We knew his faults. They were clear enough. We appreciated his limitations. These, too, were clear enough. What we loved in him was his gusto, his "cheek," his perennial youthfulness. He loved a lark; every page of his literary journalism is a lark. Impossible not to enjoy him, who enjoyed himself so delightedly! There has been much talk of "literary journalists"; of the undying distinction of Nevinson, Massingham, Orage, and the rest. I make bold to say that Bennett was easily the greatest of modern journalists. He did not always think well. In fact, sometimes he had no time to think. His taste was not irreproachable. But he never failed to write well: he had taken the trouble to teach himself how to write. *Books and Persons* has had a large progeny of literary causeries: it remains unique; wise, witty, companionable, the incomparable bedside book. Bennett's cardinal fault as a journalist was, of course, his glib



assumption of the possession of knowledge which he did not actually possess. When he says that the historian Green wrote like a cabhorse, we recognize the statement as an authoritative one; but when he airily tackles Wordsworth or Graves or Edith Sitwell, we perceive immediately the absence of authority.

But what a stimulating smasher of idols he was! The reputation of Henry James will never quite recover from Bennett's onslaught. And think of the things he did to Brieux and Noyes and many other second-rate men! Bennett was not a critic in the deepest sense of the word, but there was a good deal of the tipster in him. He had a rare and radiant instinct for merit, however far beneath the surface it lay. Consult *Books and Persons*, and consider how many of his tips have come off, and how many of his unfavourable verdicts on the literature of the day have been ratified by time. There was in Bennett a sort of inspired common sense, an almost lyrical rationality of viewpoint. . . . And of course one comes back to his writing. How plain, how casual, how effortless it seems! He is the one modern writer to make the sweet agony of literary composition seem child's play. He was the master of his craft. The very fact that he wrote with such fluent ease made the pedants resent him. Pedants will be pedants. Whatever they may say, Bennett's journalism (I am deliberately avoiding discussion of his novels in this place) will long be the delight and stimulation and envy of young writers.

### III

As this is a holiday, and the ideal holiday comprises a little of everything, a thimbleful of verse will, perhaps, not be unacceptable. The following epigram is put forward with a full sense of its shortcomings:

#### EPITAPH ON A REVIEWER OF BULLETINS

Find me a stone, and grave these words upon it—  
*It was his bliss to sting the pharisees;*  
*For always you could hear beneath his bonnet*  
*The murmuring of innumerable bees.*

### IV

I have been wondering how many public libraries purchase *The Week-End Review*. It is the best of all the literary weeklies. Both its reviews and its general articles are of high and well-sustained quality. It is exceedingly vigorously edited (few English periodicals have the merit of vigorous editing). It is wholly and refreshingly free from pedantry. Its writers—an excellent team, including Gerald Gould, Aldous Huxley, A. P. Herbert and T. E. Welby—are neither mandarins nor dullards nor Bright Young Things. They are appreciators. They give the impression of being in love with life,

and of extracting the utmost from it. Indeed, the keynote of the paper might be described, in Arnold Bennett's phrase, as "the Savour of Life." The quality of the paper can be adduced from the fact that it invariably attracts interesting and intelligent correspondence: always a clear sign of healthy life in a paper. The Literary Competitions, so wittily edited are they, and carried out in such an admirable team-spirit, are alone worth the weekly sixpence. And T. E. Welby's page, written under the name of "Stet," is worth more than that; in fact, it is one of the soundest features in contemporary literary journalism. Lastly, the paper is respectably printed. It attracts the eye immediately. This can be said of few periodicals. The average weekly seems to be produced with the explicit intention of quenching the reader's interest; it seems to be saying, "Read me if you like, but you'll regret it. I'm dull. Don't say I didn't warn you!"

## V

Librarians will not have failed to observe the growing tendency of publishers to issue new books (particularly novels) adorned with "puffs" by more or less eminent writers. This laudation-in-advance cannot be too firmly deprecated. It prejudices the reviewer, usually, I imagine, unfavourably. It smacks of log-rolling. It turns literature into a parlour game between novelists; a game of mutual adoring, a sort of literary postman's knock. The fact that the novelists concerned are known to be personal friends scarcely mitigates the offence. Let Mr. A and Miss B extol each other's gifts until they run short of superlatives; but let them do it either in private or through the regular channel of the reviews. We do not want their opinions plastered over the jackets (usually yellow) of the first impression. I do not know whether the reviewers have a trade-union. But if so, a protest against this impertinent arrogation of their authority would indubitably earn them the gratitude both of librarians and the general reading public. Books are not patent medicines, and we prefer the *bona fide* recommendation of a reputable paper to irresponsible jubilations obtained heaven knows how.

## VI

The publication of a new and expanded edition of the poems of the late Wilfred Owen should be of special interest to librarians, calling attention as it does to a poet who has never received his due appreciation. Killed by an ironical stroke of fate a few days before the Armistice, Owen lost his life at the crucial point, when his rare gifts were coming to perfect flower. I was about eighteen when I first met his work, and at once recognized him as the greatest poet (in the sense of poetic interpreter) of the War. His verse is not so hectic, not so thickly encrusted with the details of physical suffering, as Sassoon's. But it is more affecting. Sassoon's horrors were too horrible:

they numbed the senses, and eventually lost their effect. Owen strikes rather at the imagination: the War to him is not only a thing of unclean and inhuman suffering, it is a spiritual tragedy, not to be healed until "God's titanic tears, the seas, are dry." He was a man of deep and noble feeling and generous impulses; a poet of ample and arresting imagery, though not yet a sure craftsman; and in him, as in Charles Sorley and Edward Thomas, the War robbed us of a fine spirit and integritous artist such as modern poetry vitally needs. The new edition includes many new poems and fragments, and is enriched by some excellent notes (principally referring to variations in the manuscript texts) and a memoir, a model of sensitive and balanced appreciation, by Edmund Blunden. Discerning librarians will not have been slow to add this sterling volume to their shelves.

## VII

## REFLECTIONS ON APPLYING FOR A SITUATION

Now I shall tell them (contradict who dares)  
My deeds, my qualities, my wide renown,  
And how I am obediently theirs. . . .  
*Conscience, lie down!*



## ONE OTHER "VALUATION"

*Bethnal Green Public Library. Books added, 1930. (pp. 158, 1d.)*

The Bethnal Green annual catalogue has been, for some years, one of the few surviving justifications of the printing of public library catalogues. The 1930 edition well maintains the standard. Tested even by the *aqua regia* of the Snaith canons of criticism, it has very little dross.

The format is excellent. The cover, of primrose yellow, is a refreshing change from the stereotyped drabness which prevails in library publications. The design of the cover is good, although, in my opinion, it is marred by the large and irrelevant black patch which floats across the top corner. It seems a pity that the compilers did not stick to the superb simplicity of the title-page.

In view of the recent controversy about annual additions, I have been through the contents of this catalogue with a fine comb. And there are a few serious omissions (Opposition cheers). Seligman's *Encyclopædia of the social sciences* is not here. Spon's *Supplement to Workshop Receipts* is not here. I do not see *The Concert of Europe*. Alain Gerbault's *In Quest of the sun*, an outstanding travel book, does not appear. H. F. Rubinstein's *Plays out of time* was not added (Cap'n, wert thou sleeping down below?). I could not double this list without serious effort, but it is enough to show that the walls of the Bethnal Green Library, though perhaps not of glass, are slightly transparent.

The catalogue is occasionally annotated, and the annotations are unique.

Most of them are carefully selected snippets from reviews, many of them are personal opinions expressed in sparkling sentences (the adjective is dear to this annotator). Only very occasionally does a note descend to the bathos which Mr. Snaith so frequently condemns. The most serious criticisms that I have to make of them are that, while many books are apparently annotated out of sheer *joie de vivre*, others that cry out for some word of explanation are left alone; and some of the notes are a little too precious. As examples, to the uninitiated, Smith's *You can escape* might be anything from a book of *vers libre* to a treatise on birth control, but it is left unexplained. Again, Bethnal Green perhaps knows Flecker best as "author of *The Old Ships*." I and many others know him as the writer of *Hassan*. These are minor criticisms, however, and I freely admit that this is the only catalogue that I have ever read for the sake of its annotations.

Altogether, this is a fine piece of work. There never was a catalogue or bulletin sent to the ASSISTANT that was perfect. Some, however, are better than others, and this is streets ahead of most.

T. E. C.



## The Divisions Eastern Division

A VERY enjoyable meeting of the Eastern Division was held at Norwich on Thursday, 26th February, at which members from Ipswich, Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth were present, in addition to the Norwich staff.

The afternoon was spent in a visit to the famous Carrow Works of Messrs. J. and J. Colman and Sons. This firm now manufactures no less than fifteen different products, but first place is still given to the making of mustard, upon the manufacture of which the firm's reputation was built up and which has made the name of Colman world-famous. Under expert guidance, members of the Division were given the opportunity of seeing mustard, starch and laundry blue in the actual process of manufacture, and in addition, the extensive tin box and card box manufacturing departments. In the latter department the party were interested to watch the printing of the cartons by means of high-speed multi-colour presses.

At the conclusion of this excellently organized tour, the Division were entertained to tea at the works by the generous hospitality of Messrs. J. and J. Colman and Sons. To this firm, and especially to those responsible for organizing the visit, the best thanks of the Division are due for a most interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

On leaving the works, the party were conveyed by bus to the Central Library, where the business meeting was held. The result of the election of officers was as follows: *Chairman*—Mr. A. R. Pike (Great Yarmouth); *Hon. Treasurer*—Miss S. P. Jacka (Ipswich); *Hon. Secretary*—Miss M. Alexander (Norwich); *Divisional Representative on A.A.L. Council*—Mr. G. V. R. Hayward (Norwich).

A very hearty vote of thanks to the retiring Hon. Treasurer (Miss N. Wood, Lowestoft) was proposed by Mr. Hayward and seconded by Miss Alexander. Mr. Hayward referred to the loyal service which Miss Wood had rendered the Division since its inception in 1925, and on behalf of the members congratulated her upon her approaching marriage, and expressed their hearty good wishes for her future happiness.

At the conclusion of the Business Meeting, Miss H. A. Tillie, of the Norwich staff, read a stimulating paper entitled, "The Other Side of the Counter." She is to be congratulated upon having aroused one of the best discussions the Division has ever had, nearly everyone present taking part.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Norwich staff, proposed by Mr. Pike and seconded by Miss Jacka.

## New Members

ELIZABETH F. BADDOCK (Kent County Library); Michael R. Beer (Southall); Freda Brocklebank (Penrith); Phyllis E. Hyde (Enfield); Herbert J. Medd (Middlesex County Library, Hanworth); Roy D. Rates (Fulham); Dorothy M. Stewart (Wimbledon); Gladys L. A. Turnbull (High Wycombe).

*East Anglian Division.*—Miss J. Abbott, Miss Manthorpe, B. Smith (Ipswich).

*North-Western Division.*—Nellie Burgess (Radcliffe).

*Transfers from Transitional to Full Membership* (Central Association)—1.

## Appointments

NORWICH.—Miss H. Mary Grace, M.A., Assistant Secretary and Cataloguer, Northamptonshire Record Society, and previously Assistant to the Secretary and Editor of the Pipe Roll Society, to be Archive Assistant, Public Libraries and Muniment Room, Norwich. Commencing salary, £200.

## Correspondence

### "ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH"

TO THE EDITOR,  
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
VALENCE HOUSE,  
CHADWELL HEATH.

DEAR SIR,—

I have again read Mr. Gordon's paper, and I am unable to find there the points that are now apparent in his reply. I take his own words—"My ideal is to provide a lending library large enough to shelve and exhibit the books which are *in*." Assuming the books *in* to number 30,000 volumes (which was the number I had in mind when planning the Dagenham Central Library) and shelved in bays containing seven shelves each, the lending library would require 450 longitudinal feet of wall space—a room about 150 feet long and 100 feet wide (allowing for doors, etc.).

A Central Library on this scale would only be possible in the largest city schemes, and whilst it might be admirable for them, it can never become a general principle of library planning. Mr. Gordon also says concerning myself, "And goes off at a tangent into irrelevant details about architecture." Mr. Gordon apparently considers that architecture is "irrelevant" to library planning. I congratulate him on solving at a stroke the root difficulty in planning a library. But let death overtake me before I see that library built.

Yours sincerely,  
J. G. O'LEARY.

### "CHILDISH THINGS"

TO THE EDITOR,  
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,  
EAST HAM.

DEAR SIR,—

It was refreshing to read Miss Ovell's paper on "Childish Things." I was prevented from going to the meeting at Paddington, so I would like to point out to her now that one extreme is not necessarily more satisfactory than another. I think most people would agree with her when she doubts whether the standard of reading improves. Maybe she is also right when she affirms that "the State . . . is very interested in the number of bricks a bricklayer can lay in a day, and the more he can and will lay, the better it likes him." I suggest that no more damning indictment of a materialistic

state could be made, and if it is true, as it possibly is, I still fail to see how reading a book on bricklaying would be more valuable than a half-hour's instruction from a master-layer of bricks. I wonder if Miss Ovell has ever tried to learn dancing from a textbook? Or writing from *Journalism for Profit*?

I am not suggesting that a good citizen is not a good worker, but I do dispute the statement that a good worker is necessarily a good citizen. The Devil is no doubt an industrious worker. It is possible to be extraordinarily efficient and yet not to understand the forces of man and nature. To understand these forces I rate higher than the capacity to lay bricks 100 an hour more than anyone else, for it is these forces that mould our character, and it is these forces that have reality.

I am not going to be so rash as to offer my own definition of good citizenship, beyond suggesting that amongst other qualities the good citizen must be fully conscious. And, if Miss Ovell will pardon my good intentions, I myself doubt whether a person who conceives work to be the sole end of life can be fully conscious.

It is because Miss Ovell's philosophy recurs throughout her article that I have chosen to clash pens with her. For the rest, I thoroughly enjoyed her paper.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE E. CLARKE.

TO THE EDITOR,  
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
BETHNAL GREEN.

DEAR SIR,—

Mr. Clarke has evidently paid me the compliment of reading my paper with care. It is a pity that he did not also read it with understanding. Understanding, that is, of the very narrow limits within which I used the term "good citizen." This is a relative term, and the goodness or badness of a citizen is determined by the outlook of the State to which he adheres. Therefore, in a materialistic State, it is the materially well-equipped man who is a good citizen. Mr. Clarke's happy example is a case in point. The Devil is an industrious worker. And, I have no doubt, the inhabitants of Hell look up to their master as a model of what a good citizen should be. It all depends on the aims of the State. The State under which we live is materialistic. Mr. Clarke does not dispute this, therefore he must admit that its aims are purely materialistic. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and, pity 'tis, 'tis true.

My critic has made deft use of the ancient debating trick of selecting an illustration and using it as a red herring to lay a new trail more congenial to his argument. I instanced the bricklayer as an example of the attitude of the

State, not as an instance of the way in which a man *can* learn a trade from books. In spite of Mr. Clarke, I maintain that a craftsman can improve himself by reading. I think that the continued prosperity of Messrs. Pitman and Spon, among others, proves my contention. Such idealists as your correspondent may think otherwise, but I have not yet met one of them who has had the courage of his convictions and banished *Useful Arts* from his non-fiction stock.

As to "the forces of man and nature," may I point out to Mr. Clarke that the desire for food and reasonable comfort is one of the strongest forces of which man is conscious. A hungry citizen may be, and probably is, fully conscious. But if he is hungry too long he is a dead citizen. Though his end, in Mr. Clarke's view, may be glorious, he is of very little use to any State, which, however exalted its ideals, would surely prefer my efficient materialist to Mr. Clarke's conscious but starving student of the forces of man and nature.

As to considering work the sole end of life, I do nothing of the sort. I do consider that, in view of the regrettable persistence of the curse of Adam, it is a necessary beginning.

Yours faithfully,  
DORIS OVELL.

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